



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

December 22, 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Post-Grenada Public Affairs

As you know, we have been severely criticized by the press for the restrictions that we imposed on press access as well as the paucity of information that was made available to the press throughout the Grenada crisis. Although much of this criticism is largely self-serving, there is validity to the issue of press access.

I recognize that operational security is essential. I recognize, too, that if we are to gain and maintain public support for our actions it's just as essential that the press have controlled access to whatever we are doing. The two -- operational security and press access -- are not mutually exclusive.

We were ill-prepared to deal with the Public Affairs aspects of the Grenada crisis. This was due in part because we do not have established plans and policies for dealing with the press in times of crisis. But it was principally the result of Public Affairs being excluded from the initial operational planning.

As I mentioned to you, I have assembled a task group to address these issues and prepare a press plan for crisis/contingency situations. Additionally, this group is looking at accreditation (both peacetime and during a crisis), the conduct of command/internal information, community relations and its interface with civil affairs, and audiovisual support for both internal use and public release. In each case they are looking at not only how we should plan to operate in a crisis but also the training and equipment that will be required. I hope to present this plan and policy recommendations to you and the Chairman in mid-January.

I believe that the group's work will be useful, not only in improving our ability to respond in a crisis but also as an alternate to General Sidle's conclusions.

Mike

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